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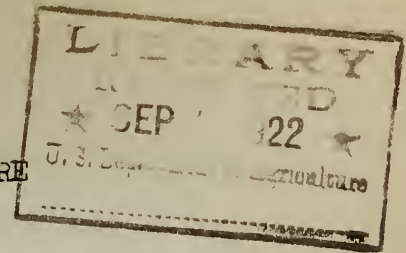
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Agricultural Economics



Report F. S. 19.

August 16, 1922.

SOME PHASES OF THE PORK INDUSTRY IN HOLLAND.

By E. C. Squire, Specialist in Foreign Marketing of
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Agriculture.

Markets and Marketing

The Dutch are particularly well situated for supplying the English market. In prewar days it was possible to ship from Oss, Holland, - three hours journey from the sea - to London, in about twenty-four hours. It now takes forty-eight hours for the same shipment, and as refrigeration is not employed ever this route, the carcasses in hot weather occasionally arrive in bad condition. But during April and May Holland shipped a very large quantity of fresh pork direct to Paris. In these shipments they were able to obtain insulating cars for the whole journey, and experienced less difficulty with spoiled meat.

Both the English and French fresh pork markets in May were suffering from reduced demand because of the excessive heat. At Smithfield during the month of May the price of Dutch pork dropped from 25.0 cents per pound (9s. per stone) to 22.3 cents per pound (8s. per stone) conversions made on the basis of the rate of exchange prevailing on June 1. At Oss also the fresh pork business was at a standstill and the slaughter houses were turning out bacon.

The slaughtering companies were complaining that the price of Dutch live hogs was too high and they were attempting to force down prices while

the weather was hot. The price of bacon hogs, live weight, was about 46 Dutch cents per half kilo, or 16.2 cents per pound, on May 24.

Hogs are bought by buyers all over Holland at local markets or by private sale from farmers and shipped in carload lots of about 45 to a car. Lots purchased in different sections of the country by the various buyers are all kept separate and the quality of the hogs and percentages of condemnations for each lot are also kept separate. Consequently, they are able to check up on the efficiency of their buyers and the quality of the hogs obtained from the different shipping points.

It is impossible to obtain weekly killing figures for hogs in Holland, but official estimates for 1921 show that with a total land area of less than 13,000 square miles, Holland had 1,519,000 hogs.

Slaughtering and Handling the Meat.

The killing floor of a representative establishment is very similar to what might be found in a high grade killing establishment in America killing the same number of hogs. Everywhere there appeared to be plenty of room. Live hogs are elevated to the rails by conveyor chains rather than by big wheels commonly employed in the larger plants in America. While hanging, heads down, ready to be stuck they are stunned by a machine which works with a spring and strikes a blow just above the eyes. This is done entirely for humanitarian reasons and is not in favor with the packers. The bacon curer is under the impression that hogs do not bleed out so thoroughly. After sticking they go through the same routine as in American packing houses, passing through a hot water tub and a mechanical de-hairing machine. Next the toe nails are pulled off.

For the bacon trade, hogs are singed as in America and other countries

for Wiltshires. The Danish type of a singer is employed although they have added a mechanical device for discharging one carcass when another is pushed in. Having singed for about twenty seconds, the carcasses pass directly on the same rail, though the mechanical chain is not employed to push them along. Because of the quantity killed per hour, however, this does not seem such a handicap.

The curing of bacon is done after the Danish principle. The Wiltshire sides are trimmed to shape and put in large concrete tanks where they remain from five to seven days in brine pickle. Then, after lying on racks to drain for twenty four hours, they are wiped dry and packed in hales of four sides each, ready for shipment to England.

While the general methods of killing and handling of meat products compare quite favorably with the high grade small killing establishment in America, the by-products are not utilized to the same extent. The blood is dried by two small vertical driers to a moisture basis of 10% and sold from this establishment entirely for fertilizing purposes. They have not developed a digester tankage business in spite of the large quantity of hogs raised in Holland. Most of the lard is rendered in ~~open~~ kettles. Practically all bacon is cut into Wiltshire sides, which leaves very little fat trimmings for rendering. Consequently, while there is some white grease and lard rendered in a steam tank, the proportion is very small and the little tankage to be disposed of is given to the farmers for hauling it away.

NOTE: Original report dated May 30, 1922 edited in the Foreign Section,
Division of Statistical and Historical Research.

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